



Bernalillo County Profile

HISTORY

For thousands of years, the Rio Grande valley has brought life to its inhabitants. As early as 500 A.D., civilization appeared along the river that served as the principal trade route between the pre-pueblo culture and other groups who lived to the north.

Francisco Vasquez Coronado arrived in Bernalillo County in 1540 and wintered on the western edge of the Rio Grande near what is now the town of Bernalillo. Albuquerque was founded near the Rio Grande by Captain Hurtado, Father Juan Miguez, and 252 original settlers who acquired land from the Spanish government on a provisional basis. Albuquerque was founded in 1706 as thirty-five families marked out a plaza around the giant cottonwood trees on the east bank of the Rio Grande.

The Spanish colonies flourished and in 1821 Mexico declared its independence from Spain. The new government opened Nuevo Mexico to trade with the United States.



"de los Estados Unidos de Mejico" This 1847 map is more accurate than earlier maps, yet still had serious flaws, causing some major problems in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo between the U.S. and Mexico. This map was off by 34 latitudinal miles and 100 longitudinal miles from El Paso's true location.

When the United States annexed the Texas Republic in 1845, Congress sent troops to the Rio Grande to protect the new territory. Clashes with Mexican forces eventually led to a declaration of war with Mexico in 1846. Two years later, U.S. General Stephen Kearny declared New Mexico a United States Territory and established a military outpost in Albuquerque.



This is the official 1853 Territorial Legislative Act setting forth the boundaries of the County of Bernalillo.

Albuquerque was incorporated as a town in 1885 and just six years later was recognized as a city. New Mexico was admitted to the United States in 1912, becoming the 47th state in the Union.

The New Mexico Constitution, written when the state entered the Union in 1912, vested the law-making power of the state in the legislature. Bernalillo County derives its authority from the State Constitution. Counties are subject to the will of the legislature, modified only by the state constitution, the courts, and the legislative process.

The division of counties in New Mexico is directly traced to Mexican rule. The first subdivision of the New Mexico Territory was made in 1837 when two districts were created. In 1844, New Mexico was re-divided into three districts. These districts were further subdivided into areas known as Bernalillo, San Miguel del Bado, Santa Ana, Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, Taos and Valencia. Counties developed from these Mexican subdivisions.

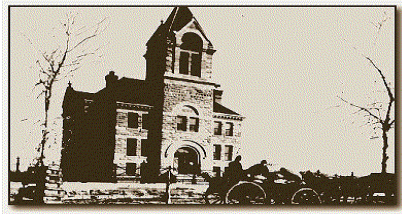
Bernalillo County was named for the town of Bernalillo, the original county seat. Records show that in 1849, the town of Bernalillo was one of the largest in the territory and housed the Circuit Court. The origin of the name Bernalillo is believed to be from the family name Bernal, original settlers of the village.

The Territorial Legislature moved the Bernalillo County seat to Ranchos de Albuquerque in 1851 and required District Court to be held there. In 1854, the legislature transferred the County Seat to the "old town" of Albuquerque, where the rambling adobe of the Armijo family served as the County headquarters until 1878. During a bitterly contested election in 1878, the County Seat was returned to the town of Bernalillo and remained there until May of 1883. Albuquerque did not become the permanent County Seat until May of 1883.



Photograph—"Ambrosio Armijo House- 1890
The Ambrosio Armijo house was built between 1880-1882 and was used as both a home and a store. The interior staircase is believed to have been imported from St. Louis. The Armijo house still stands in Old Town and is a popular restaurant

In 1875, the New Mexico Territorial Legislature directed the Probate Judge of each county to appoint three Commissioners. The record of the first official session of the Bernalillo County Commission was dated April 3, 1876.



BERNALILLO COUNTY COURTHOUSE – 1886
Built at a cost of \$62,053.81, it was constructed of gray stone with a peaked shingled roof and exterior tower reaching three stories.



BERNALILLO COUNTY COURTHOUSE - 1926
This Courthouse was built in 1926 with bricks imported from Colorado. Built in the center of its own park, the symmetrical design gave the building a Grecian, temple of justice effect.



BERNALILLO COUNTY COURTHOUSE - 1964
The 1964 courthouse is actually the 1926 brick courthouse expanded and refinished with sheets of marble.



BERNALILLO COUNTY COURTHOUSE – 2001
The design is a classical architectural theme with Spanish colonial influence. The courthouse has over 225,000 Square feet of courtrooms, motion rooms, and chambers for 24 civil and criminal judges.

Today, besides the City of Albuquerque, two other incorporated communities lie within the boundaries of Bernalillo County -- Los Ranchos de Albuquerque and the Village of Tijeras

Bernalillo County has a Commission/Manager form of government which delegates most of the day-to-day administrative matters to the County Manager. The County employs over 2200 full and part time employees. Salaries of the Commissioners and the elected officials are set by the state legislature and vary according to county classification. Most employees are considered "classified" which means they are hired in accordance with personnel rules and regulations which govern eligibility, selection and termination.

Bernalillo County Government is dedicated to meeting the needs of a diverse population. Rich in history and culture, Bernalillo County is located in central New Mexico, and stretches from the East Mountain area (just north of the Sandia Mountains) to the Volcano Cliffs on the west mesa. The County consists of an area of nearly 1200 square miles and 603,562 (2005 US Census Bureau) in population. The City of Albuquerque lies within Bernalillo County.

Bernalillo County is represented by five Commissioners and five elected officials. County Commissioners are elected by districts. Elected officials include the Assessor, Clerk, Probate Judge, Sheriff and Treasurer and all are elected countywide. Bernalillo County consists of four divisions, which include Public Works, Public Safety, Community Services and Budget and Finance. The Public Works Division maintains over 700 miles of roads, trails, thoroughfares and storm sewers. The Community Services Division includes Parks and Recreation, Environmental Health, Housing as well as Building, Planning and Zoning. Public Safety functions include Fire and Rescue, adult and juvenile detention centers, Sheriff's Department and emergency communications. Budget and Finance responsibilities include a variety of internal operations such as building maintenance, human resources, fleet management, and information technology.

Bernalillo County

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Moody's bond rating	Aa1
Standard and Poor's rating	AAA
Population, 2007 ¹	629,292
Population, percent change, 2000 to 2007 ¹	12.95%
Percent of New Mexico population in county	32%
Percent of New Mexico's jobs in Albuquerque MSA ²	46.9%
Persons per square mile	477.4

Note:

1. Estimate from U.S. Census Bureau

2. NM Department of Workforce Solutions' CES unit w/US Department of Labor

COUNTY GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Like all counties in the state, Bernalillo County derives its powers from the state constitution, and is subject to the will of the legislature. It operates under a commission-manager form of government, which delegates most of the day-to-day administrative activities to the County Manager. Through its 25 departments, Bernalillo County provides for public safety, highways and streets, sanitation, cultural and recreational services, public improvements, planning and zoning, and general administrative services.

All legislative power within the county is vested in a five-member Board of County Commissioners, who are elected to four-year terms from single member districts. County government has a divided executive function with powers shared by the Board and the other elected county officials – Assessor, Clerk, Probate Judge, Sheriff and Treasurer.

Bernalillo County Board of Commissioners and other Elected Officials

COMMISSION - DISTRICT 1

Alan B. Armijo was recently elected Chair of the County Commission for 2006. This is the third consecutive year he has served as chair. He is currently the Governmental Liaison for APS where he has over 23 years of experience as a teacher and coach. District 1 includes the West Mesa and North Valley.

COMMISSION - DISTRICT 2

Dr. Teresa L. Cordova begins her first term with extensive experience working with residents and community leaders to identify issues and deliver solutions. District 2 includes the South Valley, the west side south of Central, several downtown neighborhoods, Kirtland Addition, Isleta Pueblo and Tohajiilee.

COMMISSION - DISTRICT 3

Deanna A. Archuleta was elected in 2004. She is actively involved and has focused her efforts on economic development, education and transportation. District 3 includes the Highland, Nob Hill, Altura Park, Bel-Air, Parkland Hills and Alta Monte areas.

COMMISSION - DISTRICT 4

E. Tim Cummins was elected to serve a second term in 2004. He was elected Chair of the Commission in 2002 and also served as Vice-Chair for two years. District 4 includes North Albuquerque Acres, Sandia Heights, far NE Heights, far North Valley and NW Albuquerque in Bernalillo County including Paradise Hills.

COMMISSION - DISTRICT 5

Michael Brasher began his first term with the County Commission in 2002 with extensive political and civic experience. He is actively involved in his community and regularly attends neighborhood association meetings in the district. District 5 includes the Four Hills, the far SE Heights and the East Mountain Area.

COUNTY ASSESSOR- Karen L. Montoya

The County Assessor's office determines the property value of homes, businesses, and other taxable property in Bernalillo County. The Assessor's office also prepares the tax roll for the County Treasurer on real property (land and improvements); personal property (business equipment); livestock and mobile homes.

COUNTY CLERK – Margaret Toulouse-Oliver

The Clerk's Office records deeds, mortgages, marriage licenses, judgments, satisfactions of judgment, liens, and deeds of trust. Major elections conducted by the County Clerk include the Primary and General Elections in even-numbered years, and public schools and CNM elections in odd-numbered years. The County Clerk also assists with municipal elections. Divorces and foreclosures are filed in District Court.

PROBATE JUDGE - Merri Rudd

The Bernalillo County Probate Court serves the public in exercising jurisdiction over cases of informal probate necessary to the proper settlement of estates of deceased persons.

COUNTY SHERIFF - Darren White

The Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department is committed to working in a problem-solving partnership with individuals, community groups and businesses to fight crime and improve the quality of life for the people of Bernalillo County. The Sheriff, deputies and staff strive to provide services to the public in an effective, efficient and timely manner.

COUNTY TREASURER -Patrick J. Padilla

The Treasurer's Office is the property tax collector for the County of Bernalillo, City of Albuquerque, Albuquerque Public Schools, the State of New Mexico, and other taxing agencies within Bernalillo County.